

HANDS UP! FIRST HEARD 40 YEARS AGO

AND "OLD BILL" MINER SAID IT.



ROBBERING trains or stages is not popularly considered a profitable occupation, or a healthy one. Returns are small in proportion to the risk involved and the chances of coming to an untimely and inglorious end at the business end of a rifle or the extremity of a rope are disproportionately large. Consequently "veterans" in this profession are few and conspicuous.

There was a time when the risk attached to this vocation was not so great, and in those days the Dalton, James, and other gangs flourished. The majority of them have been killed off or imprisoned, and those that are at liberty have reformed and are now leading up-right lives—excepting one. He is "Old Bill" Miner.

The life history of Miner, who is credited with being the man who invented the phrase, "Hands up!" is an interesting one. In the October number of the Railroad Man's magazine Arthur B. Reeve has contributed a brief epitome of Miner's exploits under the title of "Man Who First Said Hands Up." The following is the story:

"HANDS UP!" The train robber who is credited by William A. Pinkerton with the authorship of this well-known phrase nearly forty years ago used it for the last exploit in the year 1906. He is "Old Bill" Miner, one of the best-known of the ancient and dishonorable company of hold-up men now in the business.

If he had done nothing more than invent this phrase, "Hands up!" Miner would have made himself famous; but he was more than an inventor. He was one of the most interesting pioneers of his art, and has, moreover, survived to modern times, and is still doing business at the old stand.

But, after all, he is nothing less than a living example of William A. Pinkerton's assertion: "I know of few hold-up men alive and out of prison today. Only in a very limited number of instances are there in comfortable circumstances, and then from honest means, only after giving up their lives of crime. Crime does not pay."

Certainly it has not paid in "Old Bill" Miner's case. He is at this moment free, it is true, although a reward of \$500 is offered for him—but a casual tracing of his exciting career as a train robber will prove conclusively what Mr. Pinkerton says after his long experience with Miner and his kind.

Miner was first heard of in 1869. Since that time he has spent exactly thirty-one of the thirty-nine years in jail. After nearly forty years' work at his "trade," it is doubtful whether he has a cent to show for it. But there is one thing he has, and that is an exciting life story.

Mr. Pinkerton tells it with this preface: "Certain sensational newspapers and publishers of yellow-covered literature, by exploiting and extolling the cowardly crimes of outlaws and filling the youthful mind with a desire for the same sort of notoriety and adventure, are responsible for many imitators of the hold-up robber. Unconsciously what Mr. Pinkerton says after his long experience with Miner and his kind."

Miner's history is that of scores of other train-robbers, save that it is longer. The hold-up artists of the Far West originated among the "bad men" of the gold-mining camps. Unsuccessful as prospectors, too lazy for work, and with enough bravado and criminal instinct to commit desperate crimes, they first robbed prospectors and miners en route on foot to stage stations of their gold dust and nuggets.

Becoming bolder, they looted stages. Finally, after the railroads were built, they held up railway trains. This is exactly the evolution of "Old Bill" in the scant seven active years out of the total forty of his manhood. He has progressed through every stage of the game, ending so far with breaking jail for his latest train-boosting exploit.

In his early career he was, according to Mr. Pinkerton, one of the most remarkable single-handed stage and train robbers who ever operated in the Far West, always going about his work in a matter-of-fact way, never posing, however, as a "bad man," and never taking human life. At first he worked alone; in fact, he has never belonged to an organized band of hold-ups, though in later years he has never been without assistants.

When "Old Bill" Was Young.

Miner, then "Young," instead of "Old Bill," first appears in the annals of the hold-up men when scarcely twenty-one years old, in 1859. How long he had been serving the apprenticeship at his "trade" no one but himself knows.

But in that year he was first caught at it, having progressed as far as stage robbery at that early age. He began his historical career by serving a term of ten years for stage robbery in the prison at San Quentin, Cal.

Nothing daunted, he resumed the practice of his profession in 1879. His freedom was a scant six months old when he robbed the Del Norte stage.



in Colorado, of \$3,500. His partner, Leroy, was captured, and hanged by a vigilance committee, but Miner escaped with the booty to Chicago.

Probably he had more than \$3,500, for the firm of Miner & Leroy had covered all of Colorado in their brief co-partnership. At any rate, in Chicago he fitted himself out with several expensive and fashionable suits, clothes being one of his ruling passions. Then he transferred his stamping ground to the quiet, unsuspecting little town of Onondaga, Mich.

In his rustication he was famous for his easy, graceful manners. "W. A. Morgan," as he chose to call himself, made quite a hit with his city clothes, and was soon a conspicuous figure in the town. When people asked questions, he replied convincingly that he was a wealthy Californian who had made his strike in the later years of the gold craze.

Then he had come back East to wind up the estate of a distant relative who had left him a small fortune. Naturally such a financial prize as "Mr. Morgan" was literally drooled into the best society of the town.

He was a free spender, a gallant escort, and within a fortnight he had all the ladies agog. And the rustic swains were as green with envy as is the color of the cheese which, according to proverb, composes the moon. Onondaga lionized "Mr. Morgan," and all doors swung wide to him.

But the peaceful life of a leader of Onondaga society soon lost its charm for Bill. Chance brought him in contact with Stanton T. Jones, Chillicothe, Ohio, and at once he recognized suitable material for a new partnership. Back again in Colorado, he entered the stage-coach hold-up business, this time stealing the horses and speeding away with Jones, Lew Armstrong, the sheriff of Rio Grande county, being in hot pursuit.

The robbers abandoned their horses near the Sabuche Range and escaped on foot over the trail through Marsh's Pass. A week later they were at work as honest citizens on the Denver and Rio Grande railroad.

Also, they aroused the ire of Sheriff

Bronough, who trailed them closely. About dusk of the fourth day of the pursuit he located them, and by a clever move covered and captured them, with the aid of James Goodven and a teamster.

Back in the Game Again.

The three were tied as securely as possible with baling-wire, and the sheriff started his prisoners to Del Norte. They camped that night at Wagon Wheel Gap, and the sheriff and Goodven were so tired that they fell asleep about 11 o'clock.

They were awakened two hours later by the shouts of the teamster. Springing up, they heard the loud, sharp crack of a pistol. The shot broke Goodven's right arm. At once they were in the midst of a desperate fight. The second shot broke the sheriff's arm at the shoulder, and the next two shattered Goodven's other arm. Miner and Jones escaped, but East was not so fortunate, and spent five years in prison for horse stealing.

The next exploit of Miner was the famous hold-up of a stage between Sonora and Milton, Tuolumne county, Cal., in November, 1881. The stage had reached a long up-hill pull to Copperopolis, when four men suddenly rose up like ghosts in front of it. Unlucky ghosts, they took every ounce of "dust" and nuggets they could find, and they found all there was.

One passenger had hastily secured a five-hundred-dollar bag of dust under a seat, but even this they did not overlook. Altogether there were between three and four thousand dollars in the little haul. The four operators were Miner, Jones, Jim Cronin, and Bill Miller.

The Woman in the Case.

They would have got away clear if there hadn't been a woman in the case. The week before they had all been at a ball, and Cronin had promised a girl some music the next time he was in the city. In San Francisco Miner gratified his taste for city clothes again by acquiring an \$85 suit and a \$50 overcoat, to say nothing of other arti-

cles of personal adornment, including a watch that he purchased from a pawnbroker, and of which he was inordinately proud.

All might have gone well if Cronin had not been seized with a desire to send the music to the girl. That was the clue, and soon the arm of the law swooped down on all four. Cronin confessed. Jones was never caught, but Miner and Miller got twenty-five years each, and Cronin twelve.

By dint of good behavior, "Old Bill" came out of San Quentin for the second time on June 17, 1901. Times had changed, and so had Bill. He had graduated from stage coaches to railway trains.

How often Miner tried the new game of train robbery no one knows, but he soon became as noted in this branch of the profession as he had been in his apprenticeship with stage coaches. The first exploit to gain him notoriety, however, was performed on September 23, 1903. This consisted in holding up the Oregon Railroad and Navigation passenger train No. 6, at Mile Post 25, near Corbett, Ore.

Miner had laid his plans very carefully, as he always did, and had enlisted two other men in the scheme. One of them was badly wounded in pulling the affair off. The other was later arrested, and both of them were sentenced to long terms.

But Miner, whose luck seemed to have changed, succeeded in escaping. A price of \$1,200 was set upon him, but without discouraging him in his chosen business.

He laid low for a year, spending his money freely and in the manner that one might expect from an unrepentant criminal who has twenty years of enforced abstinence to make up for. Of course, when the money was gone there was nothing for "Old Bill" to do but to go back to business.

September 10, 1904, he flagged the transcontinental express of the Canadian Pacific railroad at Mission Junction, British Columbia. The United States had become too small for him, and he had crossed the border into a new world to conquer, unmindful of the Canadian Northwest mounted police.

This daring exploit netted him \$15,000 in gold dust and currency. Moreover, it also netted a \$5,000 reward for him, dead or alive, offered by the Canadian government. Then the Canadian Pacific Company offered \$5,000, part of which was guaranteed by the Dominion Express Company, which had been

a heavy loser by his exploit. Not long after that the government of British Columbia followed suit by offering \$1,500.

A Man Worth Having.

It seemed as if every one who had anything to lose in the transportation business was ready to pay something to catch "Old Bill." He was now worth a total of \$12,500 to his captors—no small prize to offer for a worthless alien. But current quotations on train robbers seem to have had no terrors for him, and he went ahead spending in his own quiet way the proceeds of his latest exploit until they were exhausted.

Then came the crowning achievement of his career. Again he tackled the Canadian Pacific. It was just as daring an exploit as ever appeared in the annals of the frontier even in the wild days of a generation ago.

The westbound transcontinental express was running one night, through inky blackness, a few miles west of Ducks, a lonely station in the Rockies not far from Furter, British Columbia. This was in the unromantic twentieth century, May 8, 1906, a little more than two years ago.

Imagine the surprise of the engineer, peering out from his cab at the road ahead, to feel a light tap on his shoulder. He turned as if a spirit had suddenly materialized behind him. There stood a masked man, who had clambered quietly over the tender and was now pointing a revolver unflinchingly at his head.

There was no use shouting to the fireman for aid, for two other masked figures had that individual covered. The whole affair was executed so suddenly that it could not very well help but prove successful.

Sympathy for Men.

I tell you I can sympathize with the men who are called repeatedly by thoughtless girls, because I have had the same trouble myself. Only the other day a girl friend of mine called me to arrange for me to go see her and while on the phone she thought she might just as well have a little "visit," so she started to tell me everything that had happened.

I was in a terrific rush, and it was absolutely necessary that I go to work, and yet when I explained that to the girl she did not like it at all, and I have not heard from her since.

Another rush time a youth I know called me to ask when he could come up to spend the evening. It just happened that two of "the powers that be" were waiting to tell me some things I ought to know. All the time that irresponsible man stayed on the phone those men had to wait and waste their

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GIRLS' TELEPHONE CALLS IRRITATE BUSINESS MEN

If I were a man and engaged to a girl, no matter how sweet and alluring she was, no matter how much I idolized her, I would break my engagement to her if she persisted in calling me on the phone during rush hours.

I have been a business woman long enough to know how dreadful it is to be phoned up to your eyebrows and when the pressure for time is so great that you are getting wuzzy minded with the strain. And the worst of such callers is that they never want to do anything but chatter.

They never have anything of importance to say and all they wish to do is kill time for a little while, and all that while the busy worker at the other end of the line is gnashing his teeth and wishing instead of killing time he could kill the speaker.

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Another rush time a youth I know called me to ask when he could come up to spend the evening. It just happened that two of "the powers that be" were waiting to tell me some things I ought to know. All the time that irresponsible man stayed on the phone those men had to wait and waste their

valuable time, and of course it did not make them feel particularly gracious toward me.

There is a wonderful fascination about a telephone to a woman. The instant she sees one she is seized with an irresistible desire to call somebody up. You can see this demonstrated any week day in a department store by the irate looks on the faces of the women passing the public telephone booth. There is a moment of hesitation, then, be she old or young, she has dived into the booth, overcome by the impulse to talk, in all probability, to some poor, defenseless man who is either too polite to hang up or to tell her he is busy.

I've known men to be driven to the point of exasperation by the girls who made a practice of getting on the phone at the busiest time. A girl should have a little consideration for the man at the other end of the line. He may be talking before a whole roomful of clerks who are just waiting till he hangs up to jeer at him. That, of course, makes him feel foolish and resentful toward the girl. Perchance he is keeping his employer waiting, and that gets him in disfavor, and he likes that even less than the "roasting" of the men.

If his time is his own he isn't any more pleased at the interruption, and besides, for every ten minutes he is kept at the phone he has to work ten minutes when everyone else is wending their way homeward. Yours may not be the only telephone call of this kind that he has throughout the day, you know, my dear. A friend of mine was called up at least nine times in half a day by some thoughtless creatures who merely wanted to "pass the time of day" and chat a bit. Of course, he was busy—men usually are—and the things he thought he was not the kind of thing you would prefer that the men you know would think of you.

"Cut off the mail-car!" ordered the man behind the gun which yawned at the engineer.

It was "Old Bill" Miner, but the engineer didn't know it, and it would have made little difference if he had, for he couldn't have worked much harder or faster if it had been the arch-fiend himself. For two miles the engineer ran the engine and the mail-car, grasping the throttle under cover of Miner's revolver.

Then the other two robbers rifled the registered mail, and started to look for the express packages which they believed were in the mail-car. It was Miner's last and boldest attempt—and he slipped up. The express packages were not in the mail-car at all, and by running the engine so far away they had actually separated themselves from the booty they had planned to capture. Miner lost his nerve.

"See here! You run this engine at least seven miles farther ahead, do you understand?" he yelled as he leaped from the engine and made off into the woods on the heels of his two companions, who had already made good their escape.

The engineer disregarded the order, however, went back, picked up his train, and by running up to the limit, managed to pull into the next station only half an hour late. At once the law was sent in motion, this time with a vengeance.

No less than \$11,500 was added to the price offered for "Old Bill," making in all nearly \$25,000 for this one man—a record any train robber might well be proud of.

Hopes That Faded Soon.

Such rewards brought many posers in pursuit of him. Scouts and Indians took up the trail, as well as the Canadian constabulary and detectives. With such a small army working on the case, it was not long before the camps of the outlaws were discovered one after another, and the trail well established.

A week later the Canadian mounted police roused the game. A hot chase followed, in which the robbers abandoned their horses and opened a desperate fire. It was returned in kind, and one of the robbers was wounded. After a sharp battle they were all captured—Miner, Louis Colquhoun, and Thomas Dunn. That was May 14, 1906.

Miner gave the name of "George Edwards," but that did not prevent the police from recognizing him as the master hand for whom they had been searching for over two years. He was sentenced for life, and so was Dunn, who had an unsavory record also. Colquhoun received twenty-five years.

The local paper reporting the trials remarked: "Suffice it to say that Miner is now safe under locks, bolts, and bars in the jail at New Westminster. The express messenger and locomotive engineer can ply their callings now without the slightest fear of Miner one day holding a pistol at their heads and requesting that they turn their employer's property over to him."

A year after this was written, "Old Bill" was at large again—by an act that fittingly tops off his long and adventurous career. At the Westminster penitentiary he was employed in the brick yard. Instead of making bricks, he worked, whenever he had a chance, on a tunnel under the wall around the prison yard, the opening to which he cleverly concealed. On August 8, of last summer, he wormed his way back to freedom.

The \$25,000 paid for his capture would seem to have been a bad investment. The only dividend realized was the year and a quarter that "Old Bill" spent in prison.

So ends Miner's record down to date. Thirty-nine years of adult life, and only eight of them spent in freedom! During a considerable part of his years of liberty a fugitive from justice, fleeing through the wilderness with a price on his head: "Crime does not pay!"

Must Not "Butt In."

Until then he does not want you "butting in" on his working hours, interrupting him just as he gets three-quarters through a mile long column of figures, disturbing his trend of thought and taking his mind off the things that loom up big and important in his world, and are far more worth while to him and in the long run to you than whether he will be up at 8 or 8:15 that evening; whether he loves you as much as he did night before last, or whether he thinks he would rather have a gray necktie striped with red or a blue one flecked with white, both of which you saw yesterday at a great bargain while shopping, and both of which could just as readily be discussed after office hours as in the middle of the afternoon.

And, just as I said before, if I were a man and my fiancée persisted in calling me on that phone she would have to choose to be more worth while to me, because I don't think that any man is big enough to make a big success of a business that he runs with one hand while he uses the other in taking down and hanging up the receiver of a telephone.

BETSY LOGAN.

WELL NAMED.

"He calls his county place 'The Balkan'." "Yes," he says it gives him nothing but trouble."—Exchange.